

This Week In Agriculture

April 17, 2006

April 2006

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Upcoming events

The regular meeting of the Eurasian Watermilfoil Task-force is Friday, April 21 from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Valley County Courthouse, Commissioners' Meeting Room, 219 Main St., Cascade. That meeting is followed by the Eurasian Watermilfoil Control Program Grant Review Committee organizational meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Idaho Cattle Association Spring board meeting is April 26-27 at River Ranch in Idaho Falls. For more information call 343-1615

May 15 is the deadline to submit comments to Director Takasugi on the disposal of crop residue. (See page 2 for more information)

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ISDA asks for Milfoil grant applications

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture announced today that it is accepting applications to receive a portion of \$4 million in grant funding aimed at eradicating Eurasian watermilfoil from Idaho's lakes and rivers.

The deadline for applications is May 15. Applications are available at <http://www.idahoag.us>.

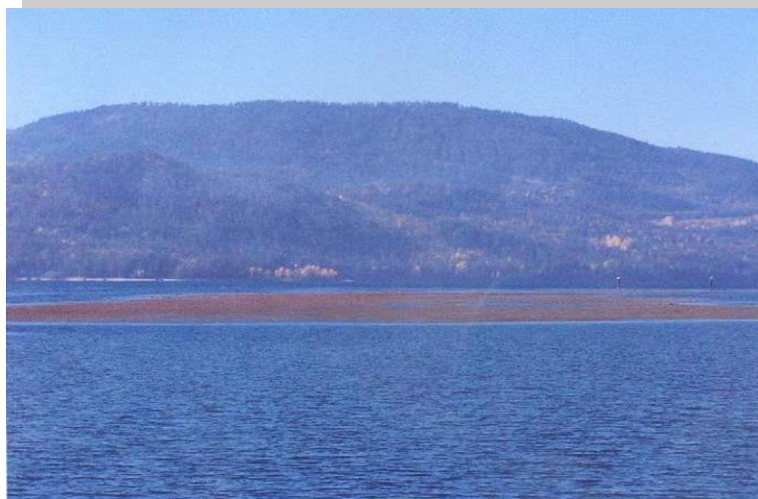
Gov. Dirk Kempthorne and the Legislature recently approved House Bill 869 containing the two-year \$4 million grant program.

Eurasian watermilfoil is an aggressive noxious weed that quickly roots itself in Idaho's lakes and rivers, spoiling the state's scenery, impairing wildlife and fish habitat and posing a danger to swimmers.

The weed has the potential to form large blooms, eventually turning into ugly brown mats that sit on the water's surface.

The blooms can easily entangle swimmers and boat props. The blooms are harmful to fish habitat, as they can starve the water of much-needed oxygen. Once disturbed and broken apart, the weed can quickly re-root and start a new infestation.

Milfoil has already infested more than 4,000 acres of Idaho's waterways. The weed continues to



This is a photo of a large mat of Eurasian watermilfoil on Lake Pend Oreille. The photo is by Rep. Eric Anderson, who was instrumental in convincing legislators to fund the milfoil eradication program.

spread, and lakes and rivers throughout Idaho that still have no milfoil present are considered susceptible to the weed.

"The Governor and the Legislature made it clear they want to get a handle on this problem immediately, and have instructed us to begin aggressively working to eradicate this noxious weed," said Idaho State Department of Agriculture Director Pat Takasugi.

"The grant program is a significant step towards the elimination of Eurasian watermilfoil," said Roger Batt Idaho Weed Awareness Campaign. "The other significant component will

come from Idahoans, who will need to be vigilant if we are to prevent Eurasian watermilfoil from infesting new lakes and rivers. During the coming months, we will be active in reminding Idahoans to check their boats, watercraft, trailers and bilge water for this noxious weed, so that we don't inadvertently carry milfoil from one lake to another."

"It takes only postage-stamp fragment of Eurasian watermilfoil to re-root and start a new infestation," said ISDA Noxious Weed Bureau Chief Matt Voile. "That is why we plan to begin our eradication program without delay."

Public notice

Opportunity to provide written submissions or documents

The Director of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture intends to issue a determination pursuant to Idaho Code § 22-4803(1) concerning economically viable alternatives to thermal disposal of crop residue. In accordance with the requirements of § 22-4803(1), the Director will determine whether economically viable alternatives exist to burning for the purpose of (1) disposing of crop residues, (2) developing physiological conditions conducive to increased crop yields, or (3) controlling diseases, insects, pests or weed infestations.

Written or electronic submissions of documents pertaining to the determination will be considered by the Director if received by 5:00 PM Mountain Standard Time, May 15, 2006. Any such items should be addressed or delivered to the attention of:

Patrick A. Takasugi
Director
Idaho State Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 790
2270 Old Penitentiary Rd
Boise, Idaho 83712

Email:
asmp@agri.state.id.us

Idaho agriculture highlighted in Chicago

BIO 2006, the Biotechnology Industry Organization's Annual International Convention was held last week in Chicago. Focused on agriculture, the event included participants from 24 countries. State and industry leaders have partnered to host an Idaho pavilion at this year's show, which will mark the state's largest participation ever in the international event.

For the first time, Commerce & Labor Director Roger B. Madsen and State Agricultural Director Pat Takasugi will attend as part of the Idaho contingent.

"Having a strong Idaho

delegation at the event gives us the opportunity to highlight our state's vibrant research efforts and its growing bioscience industry," Madsen said. "Our ultimate goal is to position Idaho as a preferred location for biotechnology companies considering new expansion opportunities."

The state's pavilion will feature representatives from many areas of the industry including all three major Idaho universities, the Idaho National Laboratory, the Idaho Economic Development Association, BioIdaho, Idaho Office of Science & Technology, The Idaho De-

partment of Agriculture, Monsanto, J.R. Simplot Co. and Washington Group International.

Takasugi says that Idaho's prominence at events like these is a reflection of the welcoming atmosphere the state has for businesses.

"In Chicago, we told the biotechnology industry that Idaho is a great place to do business and that our agriculture industry continues to be strong and vibrant thanks to the state's strong leadership," he said. "This conference will help us tell our state's great story and promote continued economic development."

ISDA participates in organic summit

Idaho State Department of Agriculture officials plan to take part in the North American Summit on Organic Production and Marketing.

The event, being held May 7-9 in Chicago is being sponsored by the Organic Trade Association in partnership with the National Association of State Organic Programs.

In 2002, the USDA gave the Idaho State Department of Agriculture its accreditation as an organic certifying agency.

The organic certification program is designed to give the consumer assurances regarding the term "organic" when it is used in the marketing and labeling of food products.

Conference invitees include:

- Organic certification pro-



gram staff members.

- Officials involved with marketing or promotion of organic food products.
- State legislators, particularly those from farm, ranch or food processing districts.
- Federal officials involved with agriculture.
- City and county officials interested in agriculture or food.
- Any government official interested in learning more about organic agri-

culture opportunities.

The summit will cover many issues, including:

- A look at organic issues from the perspective of the U.S. government.
- An overview of Canada's proposed national organic regulations.
- An overview of Mexico's federal organic programs.
- The USDA's tools for your organic business.
- The 2007 Farm Bill.
- Advancing the organic marketplace from local to global.
- Looking beyond organic to emerging products and standards.

For more information, contact Margaret Misner at the Idaho State Department of Agriculture, mmisner@idahoag.us.